

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

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FM AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8968

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NDJAMENA 0046

E O 11652: NA

TAGS: CASC, PINT, CD (SANDERS, RICHARD)

SUBJ: STATUS OF AMERICAN MISSIONARY IN SOUTHERN CHAD

REF: STATE 277011; NDJAMENA 3244

1. DURING WEEK'S TOUR SOUTHERN CHAD, DCM VISITED CHRISTIAN MISSIONS IN MANY LANDS MISSIONARY SANDERS AND FAMILY IN DOBA ON JANUARY 2.

2. SANDERS AND FAMILY AND ASSOCIATES ALL WELL AND IN GOOD SPIRITS. MOST APPRECIATIVE OF DEPARTMENT'S AND EMBASSY'S CONCERN.

3. SANDERS STATES THAT PRESIDENT TOMBALBAYE FREQUENT VISITOR DOBA (WHERE HE IS HAVING HOUSE BUILT FOR PERSONAL USE), BUT THAT VISITS NOT PUBLICIZED AND EVEN LOCAL PREFECT OFTEN UNAWARE OF VISITS. LOCAL PRESIDENTIAL CONFIDANT IS MAYOR OF DOBA WHO IS ALSO CHIEF YONDOH RITES IN AREA, ACCORDING SANDERS. PRESIDENTIAL COMMENT THAT MISSIONS WOULD BE CLOSED REPUTEDLY MADE DURING ONE THESE VISITS.

4. SANDERS STATED OFFENSIVE AGAINST MISSIONARIES SEEMED TO LESSEN SOMEWHAT IN DECEMBER, BUT ADDED HE JUST LEARNED THAT BRANCH CHURCH IN BODO (VILLAGE SOUTHEAST OF DOBA) HAD BEEN CLOSED PREVIOUS SUNDAY. SANDERS CONSIDERS THAT CLOSURE MAY BE DUE TO SCHEDULING OF EXTENSIVE YONDOH INITIATION IN AREA DURING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FEBRUARY/MARCH PERIOD. LOCAL AUTHORITIES HAVE REQUESTED MISSION

ASSISTANCE IN EXTENDING AIRSTRIP IN AREA USED BY MEDICAL MISSIONARY LIGHT AIRCRAFT TO ACCOMMODATE LARGER AIRCRAFT PRESUMABLY IN CONNECTION WITH YONDOH.

5. SANDERS SEES FUTURE OF MISSIONARIES IN DOBA AREA AS LARGELY DEPENDENT UPON DOBA MAYOR, WHOM HE CATEGORIZES AS BEING GOVERNED BY WHIMS AND MOMENTARY EMOTIONS, AND, OF COURSE, ON PRESIDENTIAL DECISIONS NATIONAL LEVEL. SANDERS HAS CONCLUDED THAT PUBLISHED REPORTS IN CHRISTIAN MISSIONS' NEWSLETTER, WHILE SERVING ALERT AMERICAN PUBLIC TO PERSECUTION OF CHRISTIANS, ALSO PRESENTS DANGER OF INCITING GOC TO TAKE ACTIONS AGAINST MISSIONARIES. SANDERS STATED THAT HE THEREFORE HAS DECIDED DISCONTINUE WRITING NEWSLETTERS FOR GENERAL DISTRIBUTION DEALING WITH SUBJECT FOR TIME BEING.

6. COMMENT: EMBASSY SEES NO PRESENT CAUSE FOR CONCERN FOR PERSONAL WELL-BEING AND SAFETY SANDERS AND FAMILY. SANDERS APPEARS TO APPRECIATE NECESSITY OF WEIGHING OUTSPOKENNESS ON YONDOH AGAINST CONTINUED PRESENCE IN COUNTRY. BARRING SOME CURRENTLY UNFORESEEN DISPUTE BETWEEN SANDERS AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES, FUTURE OF SANDERS' MISSION WOULD APPEAR TO REST UPON GOC DETERMINATION FUTURE ALL EVANGELICAL PROTESTANT MISSIONARIES CHAD.
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